Avid Technology, Inc
CountDown™
Version 2.9.3.15 Release Notes

This document includes hardware and software requirement changes, feature enhancements, a list of known problems and workarounds, and references to other CountDown documents.

Note: Before installing CountDown for the first time, ensure that you are familiar with the contents of all CountDown Release Notes and the CountDown for AirSPACE User Manual provided by Avid Technology, Inc.

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Other Documentation

Documentation available from Avid that pertains to AirSPACE and SPACEnet Applications is:

- *AirSPACE Installation and User's Manual*
- *SPACEnet Applications for AirSPACE User's Guide*
- *CountDown for AirSPACE User Manual*
- *ParallelSPACE Release Notes*
- *AirSPACE Release Notes*

Documentation available from Avid that pertains to TransferManager is:

- *Avid Unity TransferManager Setup and User's Guide*
- *Avid Unity TransferManager Release Notes*

Important Installation Note

Before installing this version of CountDown over an existing 2.9.1.x or later release, make sure there are no MOS-originated rundowns stored locally on the CountDown workstation by carrying out the following actions:

- Make sure that the NRCS (Newsroom Computer System) has no active rundowns: for iNEWS, make sure the rundown is monitored off, and for AP Electronic Newsroom Production Systems (ENPS™), make sure the rundown is not MOS Active
- On the CountDown workstation, check that the local running order folder is empty. If necessary delete any items it may contain. This folder is usually located at

  C:\Program Files\Avid\AirSPACE\CountDown\MOS Data\Running Orders\

Fixed Problems & Enhancements

The following sections describe new features, enhancements, and fixed problems.

Changes from version 2.9.2.44

Changes in how the cue point is maintained.
Improved internal methods of maintaining the cue point. This was to address erratic movement of the cue point that occasionally occurred, mostly when MOS communication is enabled. This includes MOS situations when Autoscroll On-Air List is enabled, when Recue on Delete is enabled and items are deleted from the playlist below the cued item, or when the item deleted is the cued item.

Recue on move or insert.
This option was previously known as "Auto-Ready dragged items". The functionality is the same. Now, if this is enabled in a MOS environment, if the cued item directly after the playing item in the playlist is moved, then the next item below the playing item is automatically cued.

EE events are not skipped if "Skip Offline Items" is enabled.
If "Skip Offline Items" is enabled, then follow-on EE events in the playlist were not played.

Unavailable item status
If "Skip Offline Items" is disabled, then unavailable items that were attempted to be cued, maintained the cued status, even after another item was cued. Now when another item is cued, the unavailable item returns to no status.

Corrections to text color
Automatically select a high contrast text color depending on the background color. For example, a dark color is now used for cued items that are highlighted green (instead of white). All the text for an item is drawn the same color, no matter how it is highlighted. Text color now matches the Windows color scheme.

Text Only Mode corrections
The font size of the duration counter in the event line now correctly matches the font size selected in the appearance preferences. The cue color is set properly if the appearance preferences have is set to something other than green.

New preference to set flow control in VDCP connections
In Server Preferences is a new VDCP Connection Details section that has a Setup Flow Control checkbox. Some non-standard serial connections may require this setting to be unchecked to operate.

Preference settings can be logged to a file from the About dialog.
Select Help > About and click the Log Preferences to File button. A dialog box lets you name and save a preferences file. This log is for support only; you can send it to customer support when reporting an error.

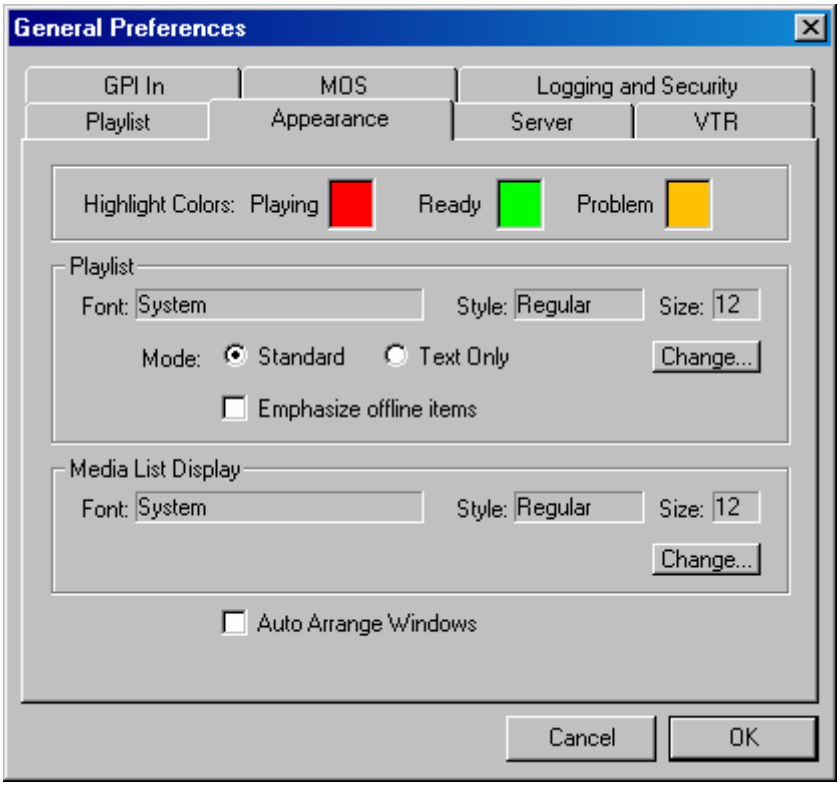
Changes from version 2.9.2.41

- This release corrected a MOS error that occurred when a story insert was followed by a run order replace and the Countdown MOS configuration setting "Always Show Playlists" was not checked (that is, when only ready-for[-air playlists were displayed in Countdown).
- Countdown now works properly with the Digiboard serial port expander.
- This release also corrected a MOS error where a cued item lost focus when a second (unrelated) item in the story line was deleted.

Changes from versions earlier than 2.9.2.41

Windows Management
All issues relating to poor windows management have been resolved, including erratic performance when windows were minimized or maximized. The list of windows displayed under the Windows menu is now maintained correctly.

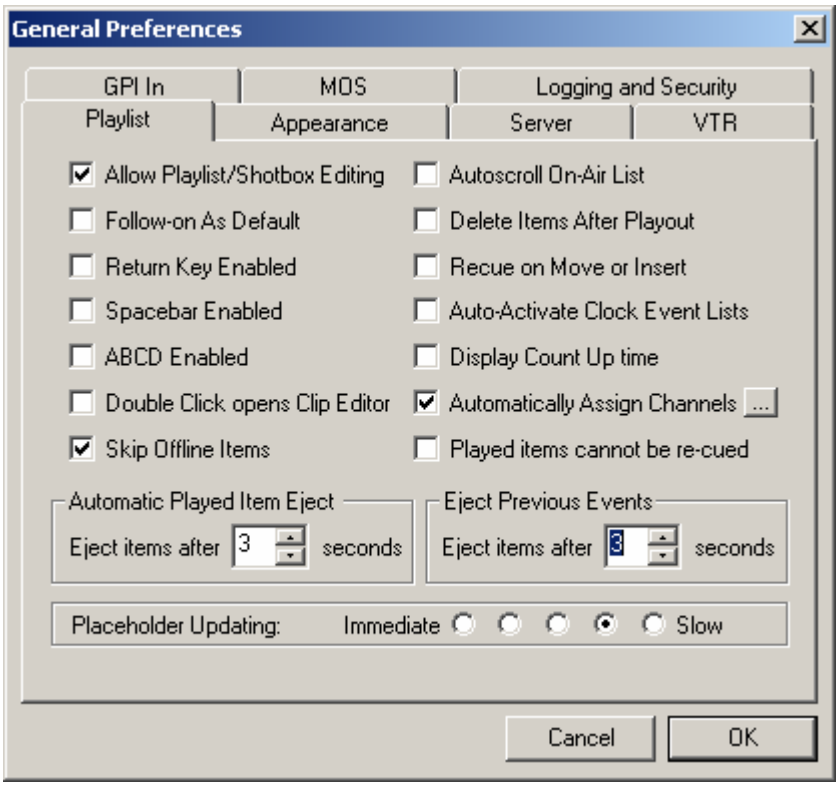
Windows are no longer automatically arranged unless specifically enabled by the user. A new check box has been added to the Appearance tab of General Preferences and must be checked to enable auto windows arrangement. Windows can still be arranged manually at any time.



Offline Item Display
The Appearance tab also includes an "Emphasize offline items" checkbox. When checked items that are currently offline for some reason (for example, they do not exist on the server or VDCP communication with the channel has been lost) all details for the item are displayed in red.

Playlist Displays Individual Item Clocks
When an item is playing, the duration field is updated to reflect the current time to the end of the item. This happens both for the current "on air" item and any items that continued to play when the current item was taken to air.

Changes to the Playlist Settings Dialog
Several changes have been made to the Playlist tab of the General Preferences dialog.



The "Skip Offline Items" checkbox has been added, and replaces the Skip Placeholder When On Air" checkbox. When checked, this option ensures that all offline items, including manually created placeholders, are skipped by actions such as cueing.

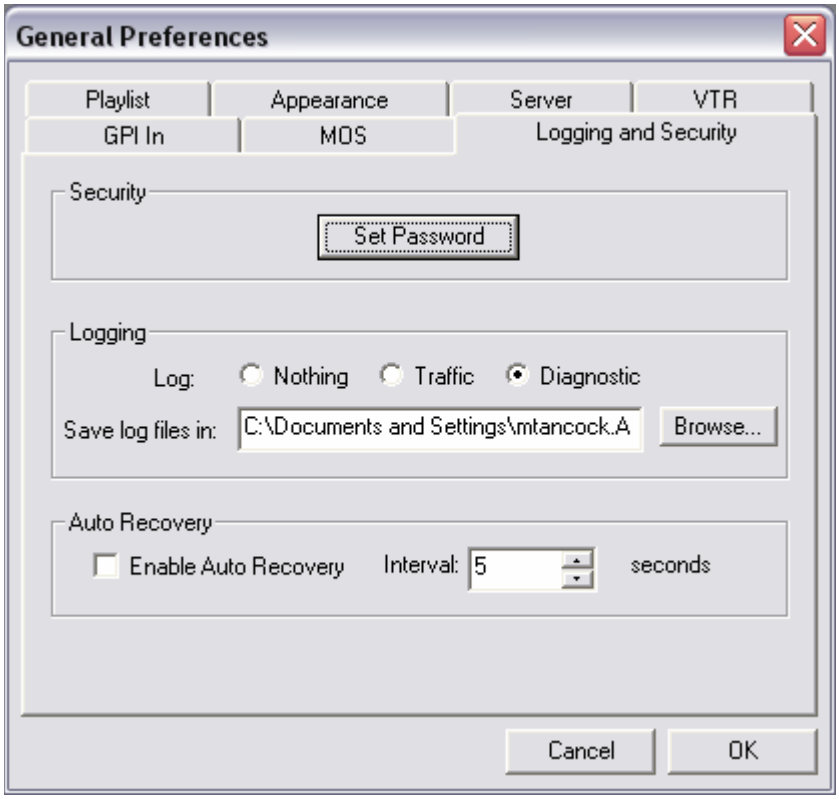
Two settings have been added to eject items following playout:

- "Automatic Played Item Eject" tells the system to both hold the last frame of a clip when it finishes and subsequently show the first frame of the next clip cued in that channel. The last frame of the clip that has just finished playing is displayed for the time selected. Once the selected time is reached, the item is then ejected and the next item in that channel re-cued, thus displaying its first frame. For this operation to succeed, "Show Last Frame of Current Clip" must be selected as the AirSPACE end of clip mode. Setting the delay time to zero disables this setting.

- "Eject Previous Events" only affects those items that continue to play whenever a new item is taken to air. Consider the example of a 2-minute clip, which is playing in channel A. After 1 minute the operator takes the next item to air in channel B. The channel A item would continue to play for another minute unless the operator makes a manual intervention. If the Eject Previous Item time is greater than zero any events that continue to play when the next item is taken to air are stopped automatically once the selected time interval has elapsed.

Note that to accommodate these settings the Automatic Playlist Updating controls have been moved to the GPI In tab.

Changes to the Logging and Security Dialog
A change has been made to the Logging and Security Tab of the General Preferences Dialog.



In the logging section, the VDCP logging choice has been replaced by Diagnostic. If selected, this option generates a text file that records certain user actions (play, stop etc) together with channel auto assignments and some VDCP commands. This logging should only be enabled on the advice of Avid Technical Support personnel.

Closing Playlists Stop Playout
When an on-air playlist is closed by the operator or made inactive with MOS, all playout activity on channels used by that playlist is halted.

Clip and Media Editor Keyboard Shortcuts
Several keyboard shortcuts have been added to the Clip and Media editors in addition to the existing jog functionality associated with the cursor left and right keys and mouse wheel.
Note that these shortcuts are inactive if the current text entry focus is in the Clip Editor Title field.

R	Rewind
F	Fast Forward
J	Play Reverse
K	Still
L	Play Forward
Spacebar	Still
I	Mark In
O	Mark Out
G	Clear In and Out points

Other Fixes and Improvements
Other outstanding issues have also been resolved and are described in this section. Changes specific to a MOS workflow are described in the next section.

Playlist item highlighting
Playlist items no longer lose their status highlighting (playing or played) whenever they are cued and then lose the cue focus, for example, when Cue Previous Item is called repeatedly from a GPI trigger.

If the current on-air item is cued, then its highlight is changed to reflect the cued status. If another item is then cued, the on-air event will revert to the usual playing highlight.

Playlist AutoScroll Includes Continuity Items
When the Autoscroll On-Air List option is checked in the Playlist tab of General Preferences, CountDown will maintain the visibility of items that are continuing to play as well as that of the current on-air item.

GPI Operations Improved
Several GPI functions such as Cue Previous and Cue Next now perform correctly. Also, these functions do not attempt to cue non-existent or otherwise offline items if the Skip Offline Items option is checked in the Playlist tab of General Preferences.

Cue Previous and Cue Next will also scroll the playlist if necessary in order to maintain visibility of the cued item.

Improved Serial Port Functionality
Previously if VDCP communication was lost, CountDown only attempted to reopen the VDCP port. With this release any loss of VDCP communication also results in the serial port being re-initialized, thus maximizing the chance of a successful reconnect.

Playlist Export and Traffic Log Files Improved
The text-only playlist export and traffic logging files now correctly format items with extended IDs.

Playlist "Save Copy" Files No Longer Locked
A bug that prevented such files from being deleted while CountDown was active has been fixed.

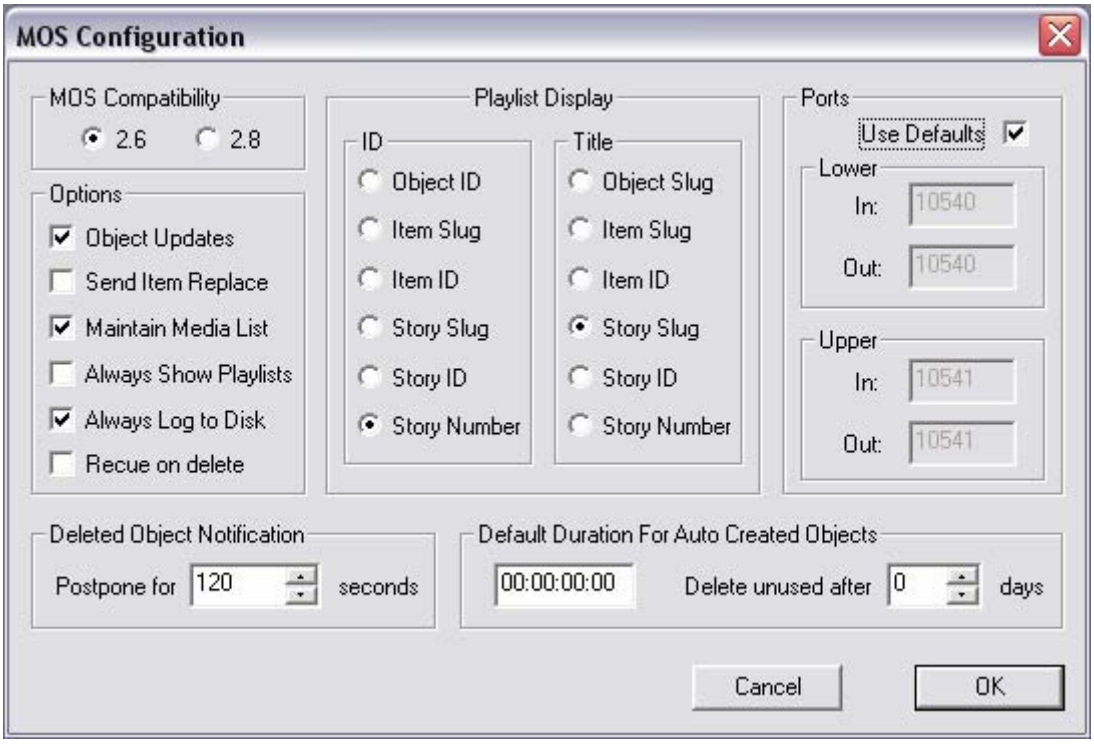
Multiple Instances of CountDown No Longer Possible
With some combinations of workstation and OS, multiple instances of CountDown were allowed to occur in spite of internal routines to prevent this. The routines have been updated to resolve this problem.

Multiple License Checking
CountDown now correctly enforces the requirement for unique serial numbers on multiple workstations.

On-Air Playlist Channel Switching now requires confirmation
Previously it was possible to take a playlist that was on-air in a single channel directly to air in a different channel even though another playlist might already be active in that channel. This operation now requires the operator to confirm the action.

Changes Specific to MOS Operation

Improvements to MOS logging
The readability of the MOS logs has been greatly improved by creating them in XML format. Additionally, a new option, "Always Log to Disk," has been added to the MOS Configuration dialog to enable continuous logging to disk. MOS logs are now written to the location defined in the Logging and Security tab of General Preferences.



MOS Configuration Dialog
Two other options have been added to the dialog.

- **Recue on Delete:** With this option checked and the currently cued item removed from the rundown, the next item is cued automatically.

- **Delete Unused After n Days:** This option applies to placeholders that are created as part of an ENPS object auto-create operation. During the course of a day it is likely that a number of placeholders will be created which are never actually used. This setting will automatically delete such placeholders *n* days after they were created. Setting the value to zero disables the function.

Other Placeholder Changes

- Placeholder generation now creates all upper case character combinations first before moving on to mixed case ones. Additionally, combinations now include the numeric digits 2 through 9 (0 and 1 are omitted to avoid confusion with alpha O and I characters).

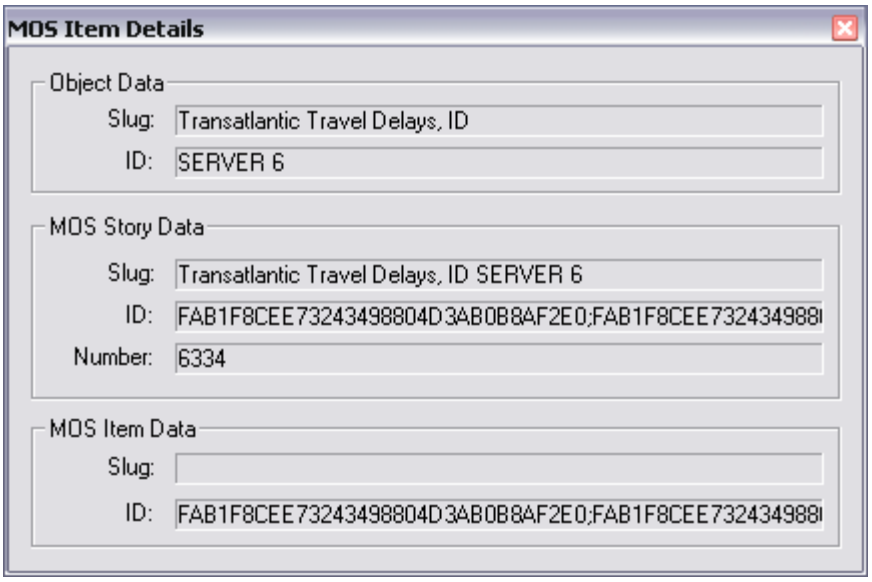
- The Placeholders dialog is now a floating dialog that can be resized and repositioned. The dialog also allows the user to specifically determine the next ID to be used.

- The problem where placeholders that had been manually deleted by the operator would reappear when the application was restarted has been fixed, as has the issue when placeholders were generated with duplicate IDs.

- If a password has been set in the Logging and Security tab of General Preferences, the Set Next ID and Delete Placeholder functions require the password to be entered.

Show MOS Rundown Function
A new option, "Show MOS Rundown." has been added to the Windows menu. Use this command to show MOS rundowns that have not been made "Ready For Air" when the "Show All Playlists" option is disabled. Note that once such a playlist has been displayed it cannot be closed other than by the NRCS turning its Ready For Air state on and off or restarting CountDown.

Show MOS Item Details
A new option, "Show MOS Item Details," has been added to the playlist contextual menu. When you select this option, a dialog is displayed showing many of the MOS-specific details associated with the item.



Channel Auto Assignment
Several improvements have been made to channel auto assignment. In addition the manual "Alternate Channels" command is now active for MOS originated playlists.

Resync Running Order Faster
Previously. selecting "Resync MOS Runorder" from the Playlist menu could take up to 30 seconds before the status of all items in the playlist were restored. With this version the process has been accelerated so that it takes only a few seconds.

Detail Updating Improved
Several improvements have been made to the way in which the details of items are updated, both as far as the local display is concerned and in the way that such changes are communicated to the NRCS.

All duration changes which occur on the server now automatically update the displayed playlist information without requiring the NRCS to update the item. Additionally, an individual item whose details are questionable can be updated manually with the "Reset Details" command from the Playlist Menu.

Status update messages are now sent to the NRCS irrespective of whether the playlist is displayed or not.

Outstanding Issue
One issue that remains outstanding concerns the feedback of channel assignment data from CountDown to the NRCS. Unfortunately, at the present time the MOS protocol has no provision for this information to be communicated. Avid has made a formal proposal to the MOS Committee for modifications to permit this workflow to be implemented.

New MOS Features in version 2.9.1.9

Countdown version 2.9.1.9 included new features that were associated with the use of the MOS (Media Object Server) protocol.

Support for Placeholder Creation

CountDown now supports the mosObjCreate message. This message is typically sent by an NRCS when the journalist wants to associate media with a story before the media is actually available. Placeholder creation is a feature of ENPS systems and is invoked as part of the AutoCreate feature.

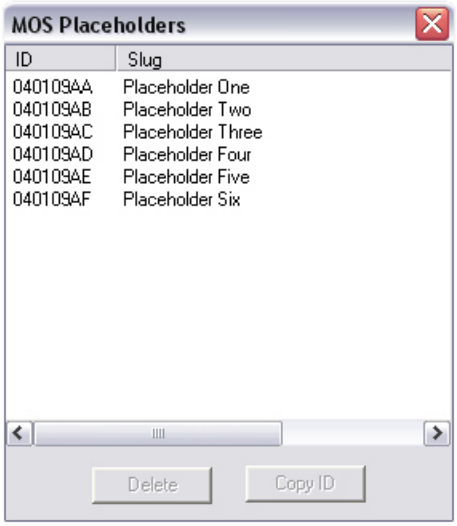
When the journalist invokes AutoCreate, ENPS asks CountDown to create an object. Countdown creates the object and returns details of the new object to ENPS. When ENPS receives the object, it automatically adds it to the story. Because the running order is MOS active, the update is sent to CountDown to update its copy of the running order.

CountDown maintains a separate record of these placeholders. Whenever new media arrives on the associated AirSPACE server, its details are first compared with those of the stored placeholders. If a placeholder is found whose ID matches that of the new media, then CountDown sends a media update event to the NRCS, rather than a media added event. At the same time the placeholder is automatically deleted, because its details have been replaced by the actual media.

When an NRCS sends a mosObjCreate request, the message can include an indication of the anticipated duration of the object. If this information is received CountDown will use it to determine the duration of the placeholder it creates. If the NRCS does not send this information, placeholders are created with the duration set in the MOS Preferences.

Placeholder Management

You can view all placeholders currently defined by selecting List Placeholders from the Server menu. The MOS Placeholders window is displayed.



You can also display the MOS Placeholders window by right-clicking in the MOS Event Log window and selecting List Placeholders from the context menu. If there are no MOS placeholders, the commands are grayed out.

You can delete a placeholder by selecting it from the list and clicking the Delete button. CountDown notifies the NRCS that the placeholder has been deleted.

Note: As part of placeholder management, you should check and delete unused placeholders on a regular basis.

Placeholders are always generated with 8 character IDs, and take the format YYMMDDXX, where YYMMDD is the current date and XX is a unique character identifier. This format provides for over 2500 unique IDs each day.

Placeholders are updated to actual media objects in one of two ways: when media is transferred to AirSPACE from an editing client, or by direct recording (MOS placeholders only). When you use CountDown to control the record operation, you can access the ID and Title (slug) currently associated with the placeholder by right-clicking the playlist entry that references the placeholder and selecting Record to Placeholder from the Playlist context menu. The function is identical to that of the existing Manual Record function except that the Record dialog will automatically display the ID and Title of the selected entry. No duration is inserted for the placeholder. You need to modify the duration field before you can select the Create button.

When used with other applications that might exist on the same workstation, such as Capture Manager, you can retrieve the ID by using the Copy ID function. You can copy an ID either by selecting Copy ID from the Playlist context menu or by clicking the Copy ID button in the MOS Placeholders window. In both cases the placeholder ID is copied to the Clipboard.

Item Auto-Cue

If the Recue on Move or Insert option (formerly Auto-Ready dragged items) is selected in Playlist preferences, and a change initiated by the NRCS results in a new item being inserted *immediately after the item currently on air,* then the new item will be cued ready for air and will automatically be assigned to the correct channel (if auto-assignment is enabled, as described in the next section). Changes that result in auto-cue include inserting a new item at the appropriate place, or moving an existing item.

Channel Auto-Assignment

The ability to automatically assign channels is now available for MOS-generated playlists. If the Automatically Assign Channels option is enabled in the Playlist preferences, changes downloaded to the playlist by the NRCS cause Countdown to automatically re-assign channels to maintain their sequence, for example, ABAB… The point at which re-assignment starts depends on the setting of the MOS On-Air Assignment Start in the Auto Assign Channels dialog box. To display this dialog box, click the browse (…) button next to the Automatically Assign Channels option in the Playlist preferences dialog box.

In the special case of an item that is automatically cued (see Item Auto Cue above), channel re-assignment will start from the auto cue location *irrespective of the setting of the MOS On-Air Assignment Start.*
If you select On Air Event, auto-assignment starts from the earliest location in the playlist after the current on-air event, and the playlist is updated by the NRCS. If no event is currently on-air then the *last item to play to air* is taken as the reference point.

Note: If an item further down the list is already cued, its channel assignment could be changed. If this occurs, CountDown automatically re-cues the item in its new channel.

If you select Cued Event, auto-assignment starts from the earliest location in the playlist after the current cued event, and the playlist is updated by the NRCS.

When the playlist is not on air, auto-assignment always occurs from the earliest point of change.

Note: When auto-assignment is enabled, any channel assignments downloaded by the NRCS are ignored.

Manual Assignment of Channels

For last minute changes to MOS-generated playlists, or in an emergency, channel assignments can be made manually by the CountDown operator. To assign a channel, select one or more clips, then click the appropriate channel button on the toolbar or select Set Item Play Channel from the Playlist menu. Such changes will only affect the single item selected, unless the Ctrl key is held down, in which case subsequent items will have their channels re-assigned to maintain the correct sequence.

Channel Locking

Items in a MOS-generated playlist can have their channel assignment "locked" by the CountDown operator. Locking the channel assignment prevents it from being re-assigned automatically. To lock channels, select Lock Channel Assignment from the Playlist menu or right-click on the target clip and select the option from the context-menu. As with manual assignment of channels, holding down the Ctrl key when accessing the function will cause subsequent items to have their channels re-assigned.

Note: Manually changing or setting the channel assignment for an event in ENPS removes the channel assignment lock in Countdown.

Changing Item Type

MOS-generated playlists now permit items to be set as Manual or Follow-On by the CountDown operator. This requires the Allow Playlist/Shotbox Editing option to be enabled in Playlist Preferences.

Support for MOS 2.8

CountDown is now able to support MOS 2.8. The MOS Preferences dialog box lets you select 2.6 or 2.8 (there is no MOS version 2.7). When you select MOS 2.8, CountDown supports new MOS commands such as roElementAction.

Ready for Air Indication

MOS-originated playlists now show a small MOS icon in the lower left corner (the location used to indicate whether manually generated playlists have unsaved changes). When a rundown

has been marked as ready for air, the icon is displayed normally. It is grayed out for lists that are not ready for air.

Note: This feature is available only when you select the "Always Show Playlists" option in the MOS Configuration dialog box.

Air Status Cleardown

For MOS-generated playlists, as items play to air, CountDown updates the air status back to the NRCS. When a playlist is taken off air, all the air status values are reset to simply indicate item availability.

Separate Incoming and Outgoing MOS Ports

Normally CountDown uses the same port numbers both for the outgoing connections it makes to the NRCS and for the "listening" sockets used to handle messages originated by the NRCS. The MOS preferences dialog box now allows different, that is, non-standard, ports to be used for the incoming and outgoing sockets. This functionality allows CountDown to run on the same workstation used to provide an iNEWS MOS Gateway.

Enhanced Playlist Information

In addition to being able to select which data is displayed in the Title field of MOS-originated playlists, you can select which data is displayed in the ID field. This feature, available through the MOS preferences dialog box, makes it easier for the CountDown operator to relate events to their NRCS stories and items. The playlist column headings now indicate exactly what is displayed, such as Item Slug, Story Slug, etc.

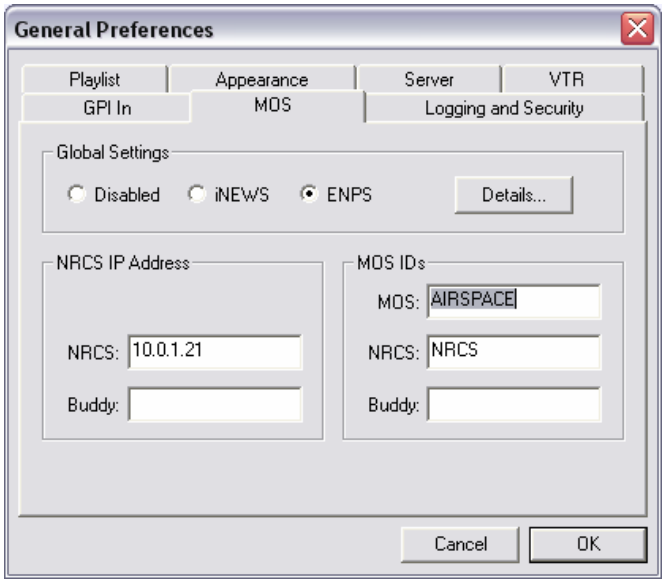
Note: Playlist information displays correctly if page numbers are frozen. If page numbers are not frozen, the playlist fields might display incorrect object information or might be empty.

Send Item Replace

In addition to sending the object update information, CountDown also sends mosItemReplace messages for any instance of the updated object appearing in a running order. To allow this, select the Send Item Replace option in MOS Preferences.

MOS Preferences Dialog Changes

Changes have been made to the MOS tab of the General Preferences dialog box to support the new features for this release.



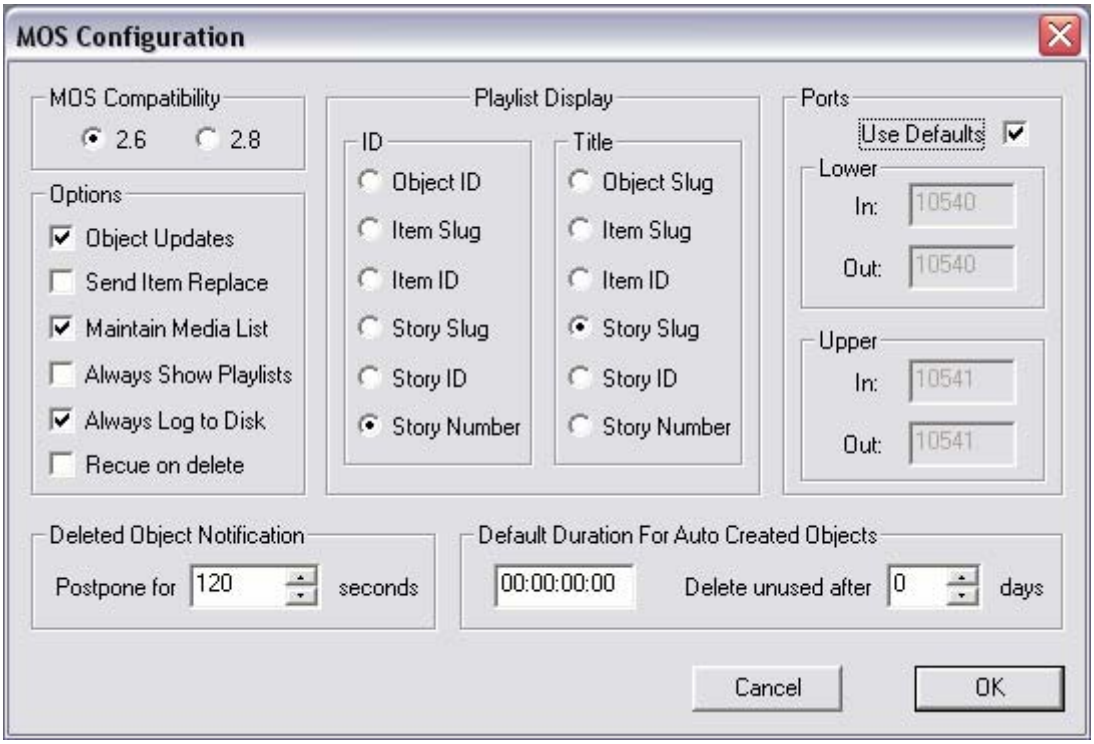
The original Enable MOS checkbox has been replaced by three radio buttons:

- Disabled: MOS functionality is disabled
- iNEWS: MOS functionality is enabled and the detailed configuration is pre-set to the options most commonly used with an iNEWS NRCS
- ENPS: MOS functionality is enabled and the detailed configuration is pre-set to the options most commonly used with an ENPS NRCS

Note: Any settings can be freely modified in both iNEWS and ENPS modes. The options simply initialize the detailed configuration to the most appropriate settings.

Detailed Settings

All detailed configuration settings have been moved to a new dialog box, which you access by clicking the Details button.



MOS Compatibility
(New) Determines the version of the MOS protocol that CountDown uses.

Options

- Object Updates: CountDown notifies the NRCS whenever the media inventory on the AirSPACE server changes, for example, as events are Added, Deleted or Updated.
- Send Item Replace: (New) In addition to sending the object update information, CountDown also sends mosItemReplace messages for any instance of the updated object appearing in a running order.
- Maintain Media List: CountDown maintains a local copy of the media inventory as held by the NRCS. This enables CountDown to reconcile any changes that have occurred while it was not running.
- Always Show Playlists: CountDown shows all playlists regardless of their ready-for-air state. This is useful when first configuring the system. This option is unchecked by default, so that playlists are only displayed when their running orders are ready for air.
- Always Log to Disk (New) CountDown continuously logs information to a location defined in the Logging and Security tab of General Preferences. Logs are written in XML format.
- Recue on Delete (New) If the currently cued item is removed from the rundown, the next item is cued automatically.

Playlist Display
Determines which information is displayed in the ID and Title fields of the playlist. The defaults are the Object ID and Object Slug, which correspond to the AirSPACE ID and Title. The ID options and Story Number option are new.

Note: Playlist information displays correctly if page numbers are frozen. If page numbers are not frozen, the playlist fields might display incorrect object information or might be empty.

Ports

Determines the port numbers for the sockets used to communicate with the NRCS. The default settings are usually appropriate, but you can change the settings to support non-standard ports. See "Separate Incoming and Outgoing MOS Ports."

Deleted Object Notification

This is used to delay the forwarding of messages when objects are deleted from the AirSPACE and is specifically designed to cover the situation when an existing object is overwritten by transfers from an editing application such as NewsCutter. The delay allows such temporary deletions to be masked from the NRCS.

Instead of sending a delete notification, followed by an add message when the replacement media is available, CountDown sends a pair of updated messages instead. The first flags the item as unavailable, the second as available, possibly with an updated duration. If the item does not become available on the AirSPACE within the notification period a delete message is then sent to the NRCS.

Delete unused after n days: This setting applies to placeholders that are created as part of an ENPS object auto-create operation. It's likely that some placeholders are created but never used. If you select this setting, CountDown automatically deletes unused placeholders after the number of days you specify. Setting the value to zero disables this function.

Default Duration for Auto Created Objects

(New) When an NRCS sends a mosObjCreate request, it is possible for the message to include an indication of the anticipated duration of the object. If this information is received, CountDown will use it to determine the duration of the placeholder it creates.

If the NRCS does not send this information, placeholders are created with the duration set by this field. The default is zero.

License

- The CountDown Application will now run if there are both a demo and CountDown license on AirSPACE.
- During CountDown installation, a license agreement appears.
- In version 2.8.0.1, the overnight license checking was temporarily disabled.
- In version 2.5.2, CountDown has serial number recognition.

User Interface

Display

- In version 2.9.1.5, the countdown monitor display has been enlarged to ensure that all of the words within it are readable. This display, when installed from the Custom install selection, is only provided briefly following a reboot of the CountDown Controller PC.

Recording

- In version 2.9.1.5, last record durations are remembered.(AIRSP00002811)

- TOD Playout DAILY events are now recued in the TOD Event List properly. In some previous versions, if a TOD Playout event was manually played from the playlist, it would be removed from the TOD Event Listing and would no longer playout at the scheduled time.

- TOD recording is allowed only when the Allow Recording check box is selected in the Server General Preferences.

- The TOD record function includes a weekly record mode.

- For TOD recordings, when the time entered has passed, and frequency is to record daily, the event time is set to the same time for the next day. For weekly recording, the event is set to the same time for the next week. In the case of a one-time recording, an error message is displayed indicating when the scheduled record time has already passed.

- CountDown Time Record—Datestamp on warns the user that a record will fail due to the length of the ID, when the AirSPACE is set to 8 character event Ids, since enabling the timestamp to be appended onto the event ID will result in greater than 8 character event IDs.

- CountDown warns the user that a record will fail when the controller is in remote.

- CountDown VTR controller no longer closes when attempting to record a clip shorter than one (1) second.

- Pressing the Enter key no longer causes the VTR record tool to go into record erroneously.

- CountDown VTR record tool Cancel and Record buttons change to Cancel and OK respectively, after the first recording.

- The CountDown VTR Record dialog box has been modified. A radio button in the dialog box may be used to enter duration or out-time. An orange or red colored box indicates cue and record.

- IN and OUT point duration in the Clip Editor, Media Editor, Manual Record and VTR Record is validated when the user clicks on any other field or uses the Tab key to shift the focus to another control.

- In version 2.9.0.6, VTR timecode entry allows IN + DUR entry when the Alt key is pressed.

- In version 2.8.0.5, the Enter key on the keyboard and on the numeric keypad have the same effect—they set values and exit when valid.

- In version 2.8.0.5, the Tab key validates single timecode entries.

- In version 2.7.0.1, CountDown uses rules to resolve problems with duplicate IDs in timed records.

- In version 2.7.0.1, CountDown has drop-down menus for the Server and Events lists.

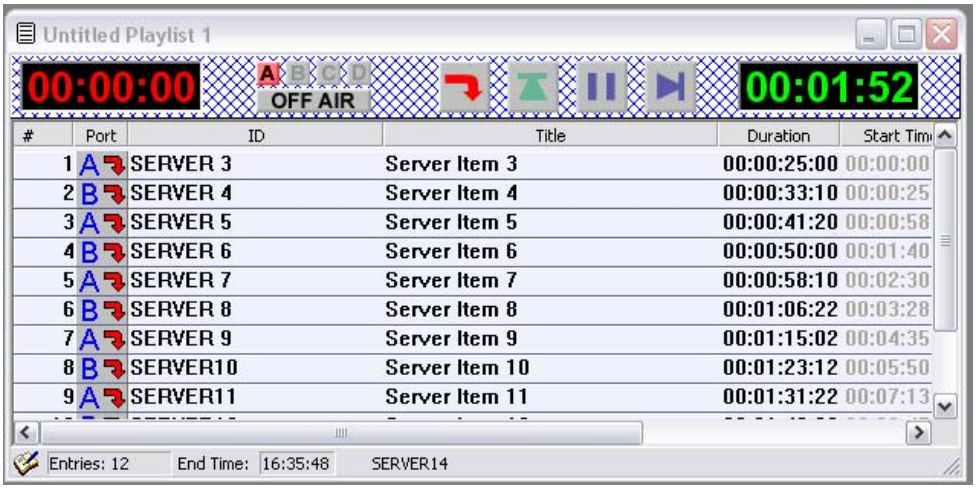
- In version 2.7, the record tool retains the last entered duration for subsequent clip recordings. The first time the record tool is used, the clip length is zero (0) and it must be made greater than zero (0) to record.

- In version 2.5.5, a Record Channel Names feature was added to the Record dialogs.

Playlist

- Playlist Rehearsal Function (version 2.9.1.9): In a news operation, presenters often need to preview the media used during the bulletin in order to check cues for their studio inserts. Frequently this means playing through an entire media item when only the final few seconds are needed. CountDown now offers a rehearsal function, which plays only the last 5 seconds of each event. (If the event is shorter than 5 seconds, it is played in its entirety).

  Rehearsal mode is invoked in the same way as putting the playlist on air, except that you must hold down the Alt key when clicking the on-air activation button. A playlist that is in rehearsal mode is clearly indicated by its control toolbar being highlighted with a cross hatch pattern instead of the usual solid color.


Untitled Playlist 1
00:00:00
A B C D
OFF AIR
00:01:52
Port ID Title Duration Start Tim
1 A SERVER 3 Server Item 3 00:00:25:00 00:00:00
2 B SERVER 4 Server Item 4 00:00:33:10 00:00:25
3 A SERVER 5 Server Item 5 00:00:41:20 00:00:58
4 B SERVER 6 Server Item 6 00:00:50:00 00:01:40
5 A SERVER 7 Server Item 7 00:00:58:10 00:02:30
6 B SERVER 8 Server Item 8 00:01:06:22 00:03:28
7 A SERVER 9 Server Item 9 00:01:15:02 00:04:35
8 B SERVER10 Server Item 10 00:01:23:12 00:05:50
9 A SERVER11 Server Item 11 00:01:31:22 00:07:13
Entries: 12
End Time: 16:35:48
SERVER14

- Playlist No Re-cue Option (version 2.9.1.9): A new check box, Played items cannot be re-cued, has been added to the Playlist Preferences tab of the General Preferences dialog.

When you select this option, items that have already played to air (shown as a darker grey highlight) cannot be cued again for playout unless you hold down the ALT key when cueing the item.

- The check box for inserting a playlist as a reference now works as expected. In some previous versions, it would always expand the playlist at the point of insertion. Playout behavior of the reference playlist is the same; as the reference is reached during playout, the reference is expanded to display the events within the referenced playlist.

- In version 2.9.1.5, the GPO display in the Playlist rundown now includes GPO7.

- In version 2.9.1.4, playlists may be built in DEMO mode without a server.

- In version 2.9.1.3, the Automatically Assign Channels feature assigns channels ABCD. The user may select any combination of channels. For instance, A/B, A/C, A/D, A/B/C, B/C and so on and so forth. An Automatically Assign Channels check box appears on the Playlist tab of the General Preferences dialog box. If this box is checked, the Ellipsis button next to it is enabled. When the Ellipsis button is clicked, The Auto Assign Channels dialog box appears allowing for selection of channels that will be used in the playlist. This feature assigns playout channels, alternating assignment to the channels selected in the preferences setup. The first channel in the playlist is always the first channel selected in the channel assignment. Each time the playlist is modified, the channel assignment is adjusted accordingly.(AIRSP00002816)

- In version 2.9.1.3, a Skip Place holder when On-Air check box (now Skip Offline Items) was added under the Playlist tab in the General Preferences dialog box. When checked, playout will skip over placeholders as they are reached, to mimic the behavior of ControlAir. When this box is not checked, black is output for the duration of the placeholder and the playlist counter will countdown through the duration of the event.

- In version 2.9.1.3, deletion while on-line was inconsistent and unreliable. Deleting items while on-line now works properly.

- CountDown no longer displays abnormal playlist behavior when Update While Off-Line is enabled.

- Reference playlists are now expanded correctly during playout, regardless of how deeply nested. Checks are included to ensure that endless recursive loops will not result from playlists that mutually reference each other.

- File name truncation with reference playlists is corrected, although if the reference playlist is the first item in a playlist its path is limited to 68 characters.

- Playlist transitions may be previewed using a right mouse click. This may only be used when the channel is not currently on air, as this feature requires Video Disk Communication Protocol (VDCP) control.

  To preview a transition, right click the item whose outpoint is to be previewed and Select Preview Transition from the pop-up menu.

CountDown puts the playlist into on air mode and cues up the last two seconds of the selected item. After cueing, the item plays, normally cueing and playing the next item. Playout continues as normal and may be terminated using the OFF AIR button.

- In version 2.9.0.4, playlists, where item duration frame fields are over one half second, no longer cause abnormal termination of CountDown.

- In version 2.9.0.4, since an Event on AirSPACE may not have an ID with certain characters—such as, an asterisk (*), slash (/), a comma (,), or a question mark (?)—the same restriction is applied in the case of placeholders to avoid trapped ID characters in the placeholder entry dialogue and text file import.

- In version 2.9.0.4, there are now two time displays. One on the left, with red digits, displays the time remaining for the current item. The one on the right displays, with green digits, showing either the time remaining for the entire list or the elapsed time for the current item. The preferences are set in the General Preferences dialog box.

- The Playlist Clip Editor includes a check box, which—when checked—locks the event properties, preventing the item from being updated when the server media changes. This lock overrides the Automatically Update Playlist Items preferences option when selected. A small padlock in the item number column indicates locked items.

- In version 2.7.2, Playlists may be activated individually, multiple channels (as configured in the Server preferences) or now in channel pairs of A-B or C-D.

- In version 2.7, the Spacebar may be enabled as a hot key, for issuing play commands, on the General tab of the Playlist Preferences dialog box.

- In version 2.5.1, a Key Event item was added to the Playlist menu. A playlist item has an internal flag set marking it as a Key Event. When Key Event is selected, the event will be distinguished by having its start time highlighted. Setting this flag has no effect on the CountDown operation but it does allow for an external application to query CountDown for the time at which this event will go on air. An external application (on the same PC) may query CountDown for the following information about its on air playlist:

    - Current on air item ID and Title
    - Current cued item ID and Title
    - Time remaining to the end of the current on air item
    - Start time for the next Key Event.

    This feature requires writing an external application to gather/use this information, and may be useful to someone with the Pluto Application Programming Interface (PAPI) documentation.

- In version 2.5.1, an API was added for on air querying. This may be useful to a developer, who would have a listing of all Pluto Application Programming Interface (PAPI) commands.

Looping Functionality

- In version 2.9.0.4, the looping item type is now extended to allow creation of looping playlists without using reference playlists. This improves the portability between systems of the Playlist files.

- Playlist loops can run forever, for a pre-defined number of repeats, or until a particular time is reached.

- In version 2.9.0.4, looping is not available if the Delete Playlist Items After Playout check box is checked in the Playlist Preferences dialog box.

- In version 2.9.0.4, loops may extend over one item, several items, or the entire playlist. More than one loop may exist in a single playlist but loops may not be nested or overlapped. The first or last item in a loop may not be deleted or cut from the playlist.

- In version 2.9.0.4, a loop is identified by a dark highlight in the item number field of all members of the loop.

- In version 2.9.0.4, when a loop is configured to continue until a particular time, the start time field of the item displays the loop break time and is highlighted in green.

Channels

- Port Indications in Single Channel Playout Mode (version 2.9.1.9): CountDown is able to override all channel assignments at playout when you select single channel playout mode. Previously in this mode the playlist would still show items as being assigned to their respective channels. This version of CountDown updates the port display to reflect the single channel mode. For example, if playout in channel C is selected, all items will be shown as assigned to Channel C.

  Note that this override occurs only when on-air. The playlist is immediately unloaded from the current channel and loaded onto the new channel, with the first event in the list cued.

- In v2.9.1.5, when the Auto Channel Assignment preference is enable, the following rules apply :

  - OFF-Air rule: unless the channel assignment is locked, all events in a playlist will be reassigned when the playlist is edited.
  - ON-Air rule: only events which have not played (below the current cued clip) are automatically reassigned when the playlist is edited. The played section, above the current cued clip, is no longer reassigned when the playlist is edited.

  In version 2.9.1.5, the channel of a clip in PLAY may no longer be reassigned. Previously, you could manually change the (displayed) channel assignment of a clip, however the clip would continue to playout on the original channel. Now, a notification message explaining that you can not change the channel assignment of the playing clip is displayed. You may manually reassign a clip which is cued, however, and the clip will then be recued (and playout) in the new channel.

  In version 2.9.1.5, a clip's assigned playout channel may now be locked (or unlocked) by selecting "Lock Channel Assignment". This preference is found in both the Playlist menu

and by right-clicking on the target clip. The Auto Channel Assignment function has no effect on locked clips - the algorithm ignores locked clips and assigns unlocked clips in the normal sequence. Once locked, channel reassignment may be accomplished by first selecting Unlock Channel Assignment from the aforementioned menu. A yellow and black "L" symbol, displayed next to the channel assignment, indicates when a clip's channel assignment has been locked.

- In version 2.9.1.4, automatic channel assignment works on imported text files.

- In version 2.9.1.4, automatic channel assign does not assign “Comments” as a channel.

Clips

- Auto-Eject Function (version 2.9.1.9): AirSPACE software offers choices for the end-of-clip mode for each configured channel. The choices most frequently used are Last Frame of Current Clip and First Frame of New Clip. When you select Last Frame of Current Clip, AirSPACE displays a still frame corresponding to the last frame of the outgoing clip; even though a new clip may be cued, it is not displayed until the operator plays the clip. With First Frame of New Clip selected, the AirSPACE output will go to black at the instant the clip currently playing in a channel ends. After a new clip is cued in the channel, the first frame of that clip is displayed until either the clip is played or a new clip is cued.

  In many operational situations, however, neither of these scenarios meets the requirements. When a clip ends, it is might be preferable to hold that clip for a short time to avoid any flashes or similar problems that could result if the vision mixer is late cutting away from the channel. On the other hand, the vision mixer might prefer to see that the clip he or she is expecting is cued correctly before taking it to air. This version of CountDown includes the Auto-Eject function, which allows both scenarios to co-exist.

  To enable Auto-Eject, set the Automatic Item Eject delay on the Playlist tab of the General Preferences dialog box to a value greater than zero.

  In addition, you must configure the AirSPACE server to show the last frame of a clip in the End of Clip mode settings.

  Then, when an item ends, the AirSPACE server will display the last frame as usual. After the Auto Eject delay, however, CountDown will send a Stop command to the AirSPACE server, which causes the clip to be ejected and the channel to go to black. CountDown will then immediately re-cue any item that was previously cued in that channel, thus displaying the first frame of the new clip.

  The Auto Eject setting has no effect if the new item is played to air before the delay expires.

- When deleting multiple clips, CountDown no longer deletes the wrong clips.

- In CountDown, the Shotbox clip no longer terminates early.

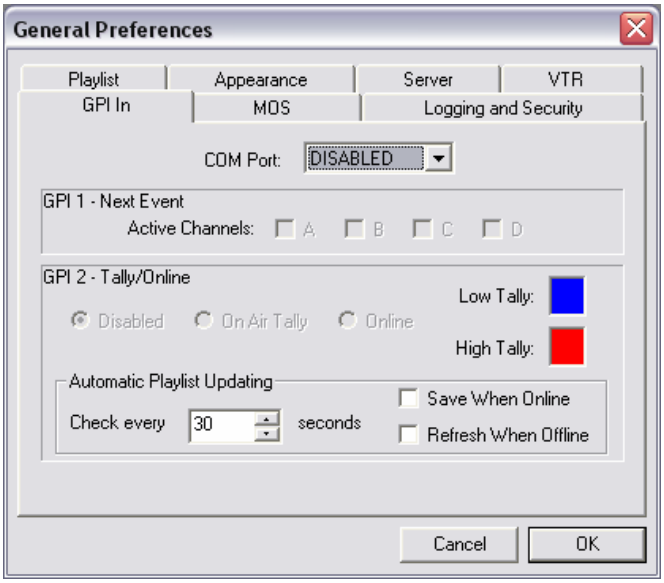
- In version 2.9.0.4, invoking Clip Editor on a Placeholder now displays the Placeholder dialog box.

- To edit items in a playlist—that is, to change Mark-In or Mark-Out—double-click a Placeholder. The Placeholder dialog box appears allowing editing of the Placeholder ID, name, or duration.

- In version 2.8.0.5, pressing the Enter key for Clip Editor is no longer used for filling in timecode fields.

General Preferences Dialog Box

- GPI In Preferences (version 2.9.1.9): To accommodate the changes to support the Auto Eject function, the configuration settings for Automatic Playlist Updating have been moved from the Playlist tab of General Preferences to the GPI In tab where they are included as part of the GPI 2 settings on which they in fact depend.



- In version 2.9.1.3, the conflict between a RECUE command and the Delete After Playout preference is resolved. The Recue command now overrides the deletion.

- In version 2.9.1.3, RECUE commands no longer cause abnormal terminations of AirSPACE.

- In version 2.9.1.3, GPI triggers were enhanced to be more consistent and reliable.

- In version 2.9.1.3, in the General Preferences Dialog box on the Logging & Security tab, the set password button is functional.

- In version 2.9.1.3, Status information was corrected with RECUE GPI usage

- In version 2.9.1.2, A "Recue Current Event Immediately" option was added under the Extended GPI/O tab in General Preferences dialog box. When this option is selected, the current clip is stopped and recued immediately, as soon as the GPI line is sensed.

- In version 2.8.0.2, GPI debounce is 20MS.

- In version 2.8.0.2, the Shift+F1 through Shift+F8 key commands mimic the actions of the GPI In 0-7.

- CountDown no longer terminates abnormally when the user selects the GPI or VTR tab in the General Preferences dialog box.

- Parallel Port GPI inputs have been modified. A combo box was added to the Extended GPI/O tab in the General Preferences dialog box for selecting the value of the GPI trigger. If zero (0) is selected as a value for the trigger, the specified action is taken immediately as soon as the GPI line is sensed. When other trigger values are used, the GPI values set within an interval are stored for execution according to the interval setting. For instance, if the setting were ¼ or ½, triggers are sent in ¼ or ½ second intervals. The triggers do not need to be held active; they are stored for execution on the ¼ or ½ second, according to the interval setting.

- An "Automatically Sort Media List" checkbox has been added to the Server tab of the General Preferences dialog box. When checked, CountDown resorts the media list as items are added or updated.

Shotbox Window

- In version 2.9.1.3, CountDown no longer terminates abnormally after opening a shotbox and selecting Insert Placeholder or Insert Comment.

Error Messages

- When attempting to rename or delete a delete-protected event, an error message appears.

- In Time-of-Day (TOD) recordings, when the time entered has passed, and frequency is to record once, an error message is displayed indicating the time has passed.

- When the controller is in remote during a Timed Record, a warning is displayed to the user stating the record will fail.

Miscellaneous

SimulPlay™, Also Known As Play-While-Transfer

- SimulPlay, also known as Play-While-Transfer (PWT), status is dynamically updated in the Media Server List as events are transferred to the server.

Text Importation

- The Unicode character set is supported.

- In version 2.9.0.4, text import correctly skips the Unicode identifier byte.

- In version 2.9.0.4, text import sets item type to default setting (Manual or Follow-On).

E-E Events Text

- In version 2.7.1, CountDown has support for E-E Events.

MOS Control

- For MOS control, specific support for interfacing with AP Electronic Newsroom Production Systems (ENPS™) using Main and Buddy servers is included.

- In version 2.9.0.0, CountDown has MOS status reporting.

- In version 2.7.2, countdown has a MOS handler for Playlist queries.

User Interface

- In version 2.9.1.5, password protection protects server preferences.(AIRSP00002810)

- In version 2.9.0.6, CountDown allows sorting of media lists by selecting a server preference.

- In version 2.9.0.6, the Shotbox displays count-up time.

- Ctrl+A selects all the media in the server frame or all items in a playlist or shotlist, depending on which frame is in focus.

- Pressing the Alt key with the New File icon or Alt+Ctrl+N will create a new Shotbox. In other cases, the Alt key may be used to invoke menu items such as, Alt+E for the Edit menu.

- In version 2.9.0.4, the Enter key is no longer used to confirm the entry of timecode values in the Media and Clip editors. After a value is entered, the TAB key may be used to validate the timecode entry. For instance, to confirm that IN < OUT, or to convert the entry to a valid timecode, such as 00:00:02:41 to 00:00:03:16 in PAL. Timecode entries are also validated if the user clicks any other field or presses any other button, and when the OK button pressed or Enter key is pressed, to accept the change.

- In version 2.9.0.4, Ctrl+Z may be used to restore the IN and OUT values to those that existed when the editor was first displayed.

- In version 2.9.0.4, when the Media Editor remains open, IN or OUT points may be freely changed and reviewed. The AirSPACE media is only updated when the new values are accepted with the OK button or Enter key. The Clear IN and Clear OUT buttons only clear the points marked in the Media Editor, they do clear any points already associated with the clip.

  When it is necessary to remove any IN and/or OUT points associate with the clip, click the Clear IN or Clear OUT button. This will close the browser and remove any IN or OUT points currently associated with the clip. There will be a short delay while these values are updated.

- In version 2.9.0.4, the On Air/Tally indicator was removed in order to provide simultaneous playlist and item time displays. On air and tally status is now indicated by highlighting the entire controller bar in the appropriate color. The color is set in the GPI Preferences dialog box.

- In version 2.9.0.4, two features are available to aid recovery following an abnormal termination of CountDown. They are Auto Recovery and CountDown Monitor.

Logging and Security Preferences now includes an Auto Recovery check box with an Auto Recovery period setting. With Auto Recovery enabled, CountDown saves key data about on air playlists at intervals specified by the period setting. This data—that includes details of the Playlist files, which channel they are active in and the event currently cued to air—is saved in a file called `AutoRecoverData.dat` in the same location as the CountDown application. If CountDown is terminated normally, this file is deleted as part of the termination process. When the application starts up following an abnormal termination, the contents of the `AutoRecoverData.dat` file are read. This information is used to re-open the playlists, re-activate them in their original channels, and cue the items that were cued at the time that the `AutoRecoverData.dat` file was last saved. If the cued item is an auto follows type, it will also be played. The auto recovery process restores only playlists that were active in single channels.

The second feature, called CountDown Monitor, is included under the custom install option. It is a small application, installed typically in the Start Up folder. This application checks—at the same intervals set by the Auto Recovery preferences—to see that a copy of CountDown is actually running. If it does not find an instance of CountDown running, it will launch the application.

- In version 2.9.0.0, the on air list is highlighted in the Title bar.

- In version 2.9.0.0, a list time display was added to the Title bar.

Other

- In version 2.9.1.0, in server media, RENAME ITEM was changed to RENAME MEDIA TITLE and CHANGE MEDIA ID was changed to RENAME MEDIA ID, to conform with other SPACE net applications.

- In version 2.7.4, a non-interactive locator operation was added.

- In version 2.7.4, a handler was added for deleting event errors.

- In version 2.5.2, support was added for changing media ID.

Known Problems & Limitations

Version Compatibility

- CountDown version 2.9.3.15 is not backward compatible with version 2.9.1.x. Due to added preference settings, all preferences need to be reset when the newer version of this application is launched for the first time.

- CountDown version 2.9 will not open a Playlist or Shotbox file saved with a CountDown version older than 2.9.

Recording

- In version 2.9, when using either VTR or manual recording, the duration of the clip to be recorded must be at a minimum 1 second in duration.

- When recording media according to the specified time-of-day (TOD), if a manual recording is done at the same time so that the time remaining for the event to happen is less than 5 seconds, the manual record and the event recording will not work.

- In version 2.9.1.5, Time-of-Day (TOD) Playout events display the channel in the Event listing but the channel being displayed only reflects the channel assigned within the playlist for that event. For instance, if a playlist is created with only channel A events and is put on-air on channel C, the TOD event list incorrectly shows the events are going to playout on channel A. They will playout on the correct channel but the TOD display is incorrect.

Time-of-Day (TOD)

- When CountDown version 2.9 is used with AirSPACE version 2.0.10 or earlier, the TOD Datestamp selection is disabled.

User Interface

- In version 2.9.1.9, if the MOS Event Log is open when you select Arrange Windows from the Window menu, it will be placed on top of all other windows.

- When a Playlist or Shotbox is on air, the user is unable to jog/shuttle forward or reverse.

- The Alternate Channels function (Ctrl + M), located in the Playlist menu, no longer reassigns playlist channels in an alternating A-B channel assignment. Selecting this function reorders channel assignments only if the "Automatically Assign Channels" setting in the Playlist tab of the General Preferences dialog box is checked.

Composition Name Length

- CountDown version 2.9 uses appropriate Louth commands for playing according to the AirSPACE maximum composition name length setting.

- CountDown version 2.9 composition name length is restricted according to the maximum composition name length setting on AirSPACE.

Grouped Items

- Grouped items do not play properly. Only one item in the group plays.
- Using a "Cue Next Event" GPI, you are unable to cue past a grouped item.

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